

Prof Jailed In Stabbing Of His Wife

DEC - 8 1974

Dr. Fred I. Leavitt, 33, an assistant professor of psychology at California State University at Hayward, was jailed Saturday on the accusation of his wife after she was stabbed several times in the chest.

Mrs. Diane Leavitt, 31, was in critical condition in the intensive care unit at Highland Hospital, where she was taken early Saturday morning from the couple's home at 3317 Brunell Drive in Oakland.

Leavitt called police at 5:30 a.m. and told them he had found his wife wounded and bleeding.

When Officers Gregory Randolph and David Donovan arrived, they said Leavitt was standing on the front porch in a bloody T-shirt and told them his wife had been stabbed and was lying downstairs.

Mrs. Leavitt was found in the hallway just outside her bedroom, the officers reported, and there were blood stains in the hall and the bedroom.

Leavitt told the police the couple had returned from a party about 12:30 a.m. He said he had difficulty sleeping and went for a ride about 4 a.m. He said he returned about 5 a.m. and found his wife wounded.

Leavitt said there were various articles missing from the house. Police found the cabinet doors open in the kitchen and a sliding glass window in a playroom had been pulled out of its groove and pushed in.

When she reached the hospital, Mrs. Leavitt told police her husband had stabbed her and Leavitt was arrested for investigation of assault with a deadly weapon.

He was being held on \$5,000 bail.

Teacher Denies He Stabbed Wife

Fred I. Leavitt, 33, pleaded innocent in Oakland Municipal Court yesterday to a charge of attempted murder stemming from the alleged Dec. 7 stabbing of his wife.

Leavitt, an assistant professor of psychology at California State University at Hayward, appeared before Judge Courtland D. Arne. The judge scheduled a preliminary hearing on the charge for Dec. 30. Leavitt is in custody on \$50,000 bail.

According to the attempted murder complaint signed by Oakland Homicide Sgt. Richard Randall, Leavitt stabbed his wife, Diane, 31, then called police and told officers he found her lying in a downstairs room when he returned to their home at 3317 Brunell Drive.

Mrs. Leavitt is still in Highland Hospital.

Back to Jail, for A Job

NOV 23 1975

Dr. Fred I. Leavitt, former California State University at Hayward psychologist who served six months at Santa Rita after pleading guilty to stabbing his wife, has been retained as a consultant to a firm which wants to do a study at the jail.

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors has earmarked \$100,000 for an investigation of what should replace the present post-sentence facility at the jail, the section where inmates actually serve time.

Leavitt is now associated with "community planning consultants," which has submitted a proposal to do the study.

Leavitt pleaded guilty to a charge of felonious assault. Reduced from attempted murder, after his wife. Dianne was stabbed 13 times at their home in Oakland on Dec. 7, 1974.

He was sentenced to six months in jail and placed on five years probation.

Jail Term for Prof In Wife Knifing

MAR 28 1975

Fred L. Leavitt, 34, associate psychology professor at California State University, Hayward, has received a six-month jail term as part of five years probation for a knifing assault on his wife, Dianne, 31.

Mrs. Leavitt, mother of their two small daughters, was stabbed 13 times in the back and chest in their home at 3317 Brunell St., Oakland, on Dec. 7.

Superior Court Judge Stanley P. Golde suspended a prison sentence, refused to give Leavitt credit for time served so far in county jail and ordered that he undergo psychiatric treatment and pay for it himself.

Lincoln Mintz, attorney for Leavitt, said his client is losing his tenured faculty position and may not be able to pay counseling fees. Golde said that he will modify the

order if it is proven that Leavitt is impoverished.

The judge required that Leavitt stay away from his wife, whom Mintz said is instituting divorce proceedings.

Originally, Leavitt was charged with attempted murder but pleaded guilty to the lesser charge of felonious assault.

Deputy Dist. Atty. George Nicholson pleaded for a prison term, stating that Leavitt had plotted to kill his wife and told police an intruder had done the knifing.

Probation deputy Gwen Hopper advocated a prison commitment of 90 days for a diagnostic study. She said he had rejected the possibility of psychiatric therapy "because he does not have faith in it and felt he would be hypocritical to his own standards if he sought this solution."

Mrs. Hopper said Leavitt claimed he was suffering severe depression and "apparently wanted out of his marital situation, but couldn't face the trauma of asking for a divorce."

The dangers of making drug use a crime

TUE MAY 21 1985

By Fred Leavitt

I would like to join the mayor, the police chief and your sportswriter in condemning drug abuse. I'd like to but can't, because I don't read "drugabuse" as a single word. To me it's a pair, like "child abuse" and "food addiction," with each word having a separate meaning.

People who are horrified by child abuse and against food addiction generally like children and food, but those who talk of drugabuse can't distinguish between the component words. For them, drugabuse and drug are equally evil, and users and abusers are the same.

My perspective is different and allows me to appreciate the irony of treating all drug use as drugabuse — it adds to the tragedy. When users are caught, they pay stiff penalties: attorney's fees, fines, and jail sentences. Many have lost their jobs. As a result, they may become drug abusers. And the rest of society suffers as well.

A significant proportion of crimes, perhaps most of them, are committed by drug abusers and are drug-related. The mayor and others use that as proof that drugs are bad.

It's not the drugs but the drug laws that are guilty. Anti-drug people may cheer when police arrest dealers and confiscate huge quantities of illegal drugs, but would perhaps cheer less loudly if they understood the consequences. For drug busts drive up prices of what remains, and people with habits must then commit even more crimes to maintain themselves. The cheerers better stay home, because their stereo sets and VCRs become more inviting than ever.

I'm not arguing that drugs are safe. Tobacco, for example, is deadly; people who use even small amounts place themselves at risk for many diseases. Smoking any substance probably impairs health greatly. Alcohol, cocaine, marijuana, caffeine, and heroin all have serious negative effects (though

they may be less dangerous than socially approved activities like climbing mountains, skiing and living in Los Angeles). But laws against drugs increase the dangers. The laws invade privacy, create a highly profitable commodity for organized and unorganized crime, divert police from more important work, and add to the burden of the judicial system.

Drug effects are not exclusively negative, otherwise nobody would use or abuse. People take drugs because they expect positive outcomes: relief from stress (which, unrelieved, is physically debilitating and precipitates many serious illnesses), elevation of mood, insights into personal problems, creative ideas and even powerful religious experiences. The drugs don't always work, and some people may achieve similar results without drugs; those aren't valid reasons for denying drugs to people who find them valuable.

I don't mean to sound glib. Legalization of drugs would cause many problems, and I have no easy answers for them. I write because I resent other people, such as baseball commissioner Ueberroth and sportswriter Newhouse, who think they have the answers — answers that are invariably punitive toward people with different lifestyles. They support mandatory testing for drugs and harsh penalties for users. They make no distinction between users who lead exemplary lives, and heavy abusers.

They regard abusers as criminals (which is correct, because the law says that use of certain drugs is a criminal act) rather than as sick people in need of help. They think that by abolishing civil liberties, they will eradicate drugs. If they could only be made to see that "drug abuse" is two words, they'd understand how badly they miss the mark.

Fred Leavitt is a professor at Cal State-Hayward, and author of "Drugs and Behavior."

Valid experiments or animal abuse?

TUE MAR 29 1988



**FRED
LEAVITT**

In recent weeks, The Tribune has printed several strong letters in response to Peter Aleshire's article about the research of Berkeley professor Irving Zucker. Animal rights activists do a great service when they call attention to abuses of animals at the university and other college campuses. But they would probably gain much more support, both outside and within the scientific community, if they discriminated between the different purposes for

which animals are used.

■ Animals are used to provide vivid demonstration of phenomena. In some medical schools, the intestines of dogs are sewn up so the dogs can't defecate, and they inevitably die. Students probably remember better when they watch such agonizing deaths than if they merely read from textbooks, but that is insufficient reason to kill or torture animals; and there is certainly no reason to do repeated, live demonstrations when a single case on videotape would suffice.

■ Students gain hands-on experience from performing surgical and other techniques on animals. Instructors should consider whether the tasks are essential for the demands of their courses and needs of their students.

Psychology students at Cal State-Hayward are required to take a lab course in experimental psychology. Until a few years ago, many instructors — I was one of them — assigned each student a rat to work with. This was done even though few of the students were interested in careers in animal research. Once the quarter was over, there was no further use for the rats. We couldn't keep them, so they were killed.

To prevent that from happening, many students took the rats home as pets. I now believe, partly because the animal rights people sensitized me to the problem, that such indiscriminate use of animals is wrong. Alternative methods are available for teaching principles of experimentation, and instructors should be made aware of and encouraged to use them.

But activists go too far when they claim, as some have done, that alternatives to animal laboratories exist for all important teaching objectives. Given a choice, how many of us would elect to undergo surgery with a person who had never operated on any living organism?

■ Animals are subjects in experiments designed to answer practical problems. Opponents of such research claim (correctly) that the solutions are often erroneous or not forthcoming. Despite the enormous sums spent on cancer research, scientists

have not found a cure; and many drugs have proven hazardous to humans after passing safety tests with animals.

But people who focus on the failures must do so for rhetorical reasons rather than in the interest of truth. Animal research has helped medical science. Neurosurgeon Robert White wrote that virtually no major treatment or surgical procedure in modern medicine could have been developed without animal research. Animal models have helped scientists conquer polio, scarlet fever, smallpox, diphtheria and many other diseases.

The use of animal models by the pharmaceutical industry increases the likelihood that new drugs will be safe and effective. I, for one, am glad that new medications are tested in animals before being released for human use.

It is easy to criticize animal research in the abstract, but people feel differently when the results may impinge on their lives. For example, most respondents to a British survey conducted several years ago argued strongly against the testing of cosmetics on animals. Yet in a second survey of a similar sample just a few years later, 100 percent answered "No" to the following question: "Would you use a shampoo if it had not been safety tested on animals?"

■ Animals are used in basic research. Basic research often seems bizarre to lay people and even to scientists outside a particular field of expertise, but major scientific advances, often with far-ranging practical applications, are a frequent result.

Darwin measured thousands of beaks of birds on his way to formulating the theory of evolution. Gregor Mendel painstakingly cross-pollinated pea plants to learn how characteristics are inherited. Pasteur inoculated chickens with microbe cultures and Einstein did thought experiments in which he leaped from one train traveling at the speed of light to another. By contrast, practical researchers stick close to what is known, to the commonplace, so they are less likely to make profound discoveries.

Scientists try to create a coherent account of the world and our place in it. Their discoveries often have aesthetic appeal and help mold our religions, philosophies, literature and art. These additional benefits of basic research place an added burden on animal experimenters — they must endure that their research is not perceived as sanctioning gratuitous cruelty.

I have argued for certain uses of animals and against others. But even if some experiments are justified, animals should never be subjected to painful conditions beyond the requirements of the experiment. The animal rights activists should remain vigilant against people who disregard this responsibility. If the activists limited themselves to uncovering such people and stopping their abuses, they would probably receive the support of most of the scientific community, including Professor Zucker.

Fred Leavitt teaches at Cal State-Hayward.

My WORD

Fix affirmative action, but don't abolish it

By Fred Leavitt

FEW people today call themselves racist. The authors of the badly flawed and racist book, "The Bell Curve" claim to want equality. So does Glynn Custred, spokesman for the initiative to abolish affirmative action programs.

Denials of racist motives reflect a change in society — but change is not the same as progress.

Custred argues that affirmative action programs discriminate against white men. "Reverse discrimination" enrages his constituency but is a misleading phrase.

First, though white men who've lost out on job opportunities deserve sympathy, their losses should be viewed in context. Every government program has costs. Childless couples pay tax dollars to support public schools, ordinary students are denied resources that go to the gifted, and nonfarmers pay for farm subsidies.

Second, most skilled whites can get jobs in their chosen fields; the parents of today's African-American job seekers could not.

Third, the fear that unqualified people will be allowed to work in vital professions is unfounded; those who get preferential status must still be qualified.

Fourth, old-fashioned racism in the U.S. has been and continues to be a crucial factor in the unequal distribution of wealth, power, educational opportunities, and justice.

These facts bear on two key points.

➤ Custred wants jobs and scholarships to be awarded on the basis of objective criteria. But objectivity has nothing to do with fairness or usefulness. Dark skin, an objective criterion, once excluded people from professional sports. IQ scores are objective, but they are inaccurate forecasters of college grade point average and long-range occupational success.

Other tests are even less accurate. Many tests predict accurately, but only because the tests and evaluators of job performance share the same biases.

➤ African-American job seekers are more likely than whites to have grown up in areas of high population density; to have had poor prenatal and postnatal medical care and nutrition; to have been exposed to drugs and crime; to have gone to poor schools. Each of these factors affects test scores profoundly.

Local phone directories list hundreds of private schools that feature small classes, low student-teacher ratios, and wonderful resources. Parents pay thousands of dollars an-

nually so their children can attend such schools. The children surely gain a test-taking edge over housing project residents.

More whites than African Americans can afford expensive preparatory courses for the SAT, GRE and related exams. The courses improve test performance, not subsequent job performance.

A racer wearing leg weights who finishes second to an unburdened runner may be the better prospect for future races. Similarly, a high school graduate from West Oakland may be a better candidate for college than a private school graduate — despite having lower test scores. (People who make such arguments are called bleeding hearts, which implies weakness. The true weak ones are those who shackle their competitors with weights.)

Affirmative action programs do not go too far. The U.S. has perpetrated inhumanities on people of color for centuries. Giving them preferential job opportunities does not tip the scale in the other direction.

The programs have not worked perfectly, and they may need fixing. So let's fix, not abolish.

Dr. Fred Leavitt is a professor in the psychology department at Cal State University Hayward.